IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A computer-implemented study merging method, comprising:

merging a patient's first medical study with a logically related second medical study, such that the resultant to create a composite study; and

reconciling is the first medical study and has a study identifiers of the first and second medical study studies in favor of the first medical study, whose unique study identifier, having a distinct database entity, is thereby assigned to the composite study, wherein the said merging includes an automatic adding of medical information of the second medical study to the first medical study in the creating of said composite study.

2. (original) The study merging method of claim 1, wherein the medical information is at least one of medical images, patient measurements, findings, comments, waveforms, Doppler audio, and a medical study report.

3. (currently amended) The study merging method of claim 2, further comprising computing wherein patient measurement information of the first medical study is computed, based on the patient measurements in the second medical study, upon said merging the first and second medical studies.

4. (currently amended) The study merging method of claim 1, wherein said adding comprises adding stage information of the second medical study is added to the first medical study according to a protocol attribute of the second medical study.

5. (currently amended) The study merging method of claim 1, wherein the first

and second medical studies include unique identifiers according to a <u>lexicon of Digital Imaging and Communication in Medicine (DICOM)</u> ~~standard~~.

6. (currently amended) The study merging method of claim 1, wherein <u>said adding comprises adding</u> a series instance identifier, for a series of the second medical study, ~~is added~~ to the first medical study without generating a new series instance identifier in the first medical study for said series of the second medical study.

7. (currently amended) The study merging method of claim 1, wherein <u>said adding comprises adding</u> new medical information of the second medical study ~~is added~~ to the composite study based on the new medical information including a study identifier of the second medical study.

8. (currently amended) The study merging method of claim 1, further comprising identifying the first and second medical studies<u>, wherein</u> ~~and initiating~~ said merging <u>is initiated</u> from a terminal remote from a storage unit containing either of the first and second medical studies.

9. (currently amended) A <u>computer-implemented</u> study merging method, comprising:

merging a patient's first medical study with a logically related second medical study <u>to create a merged study</u>, such that medically context-specific information stored in at least one of the first and second medical studies is merged based upon a protocol of at least one of the first and second studies, the protocol being indicated by an attribute of at least one of the first and second studies<u>;</u>

<u>saving respective identifiers of the first and second studies;</u>

_____ deleting a distinct database identity for at least one of the first and second studies; and

_____ assigning a unique study identifier to the merged study.

10. (original) The study merging method of claim 9, wherein the medically context-specific information is stage information.

11. (original) The study merging method of claim 9, wherein the medically context-specific information is measurement information.

12. (currently amended) A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium in which is embodied~~comprising~~ a program having instructions executable by~~to control~~ a computer to perform acts, said acts comprising:

merg~~ing~~e a patient's first medical study with a logically related second medical study, ~~such that the resultant~~to create a composite study; and

_____ reconciling ~~is the first medical study and has a~~ study identifier~~s~~ of the first and second medical ~~study~~studies in favor of the first medical study, whose unique study identifier, having a distinct database entity, is thereby assigned to the composite study, _____

_____ wherein ~~the~~said merging includes an automatic adding of medical information of the second medical study to the first medical study in the creating of said composite study.

13. (currently amended) The computer ~~readable medium~~program product of claim 12, wherein the medical information is at least one of medical images, patient measurements, findings, comments, waveforms, Doppler audio, and a medical study report.

14. (currently amended) The computer ~~readable medium~~program product of claim 13, wherein said automatic adding comprises computing patient measurement information of the first medical study ~~is computed~~, based on the patient measurements in the second medical study, upon said merging ~~the first and second medical studies~~.

15. (currently amended) The computer ~~readable medium~~program product of claim 12, wherein said automatic adding comprises adding stage information of the second medical study ~~is added~~ to the first medical study according to a protocol attribute of the second medical study, upon said merging ~~the first and second medical studies~~.

16. (currently amended) The computer program product~~readable medium~~ of claim 12, wherein the first and second medical studies include unique identifiers according to a lexicon of Digital Imaging and Communication in Medicine (DICOM)~~ standard~~.

17. (currently amended) The computer ~~readable medium~~program product of claim 12, wherein said automatic adding comprises adding a series instance identifier, for a series of the second medical study, ~~is added ~~to the first medical study without generating a new series instance identifier in the first medical study for said series of the second medical study.

18. (currently amended) The computer ~~readable medium~~program product of claim 12, wherein said automatic adding comprises adding new medical information of the first or second medical studies ~~is added ~~to the composite study based on the new medical information including a study identifier of either of the first or second medical studies.

19. (currently amended) The computer ~~readable medium~~program product of claim 18, wherein said acts further ~~comprising~~comprise controlling the computer to notify a user when said adding of the new medical information is performed~~added to the merged first medical study~~.

20. (currently amended) The computer ~~readable medium~~program product of claim 12, further comprising controlling the computer to delete a distinct database identity of the second medical study.

21. (currently amended) The computer program product~~readable medium~~ of claim 12, wherein said acts further ~~comprising~~comprise controlling the computer to identify the first and second medical studies, wherein ~~and initiating~~ said merging is initiated from a terminal remote from a storage unit containing either of the first and second medical studies.

22. (currently amended) A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium in which is embodied~~comprising~~ a program having instructions executable by~~to control~~ a computer to perform acts, said acts comprising:

mergin~~e~~g a patient's first medical study with a logically related second medical study to create a merged study, such that medically context-specific information stored in at least one of the first and second medical studies is merged based upon a protocol of at least one of the first and second studies, the protocol being indicated by an attribute of at least one of the first and second studies;

saving respective identifiers of the first and second studies;

deleting a distinct database identity for at least one of the first and second studies; and

assigning a unique study identifier to the merged study.

23. (currently amended) The computer program product~~readable medium~~ of claim 22, wherein the medically context-specific information is stage information.

24. (currently amended) The computer program product~~readable medium~~ of claim 22, wherein the medically context-specific information is measurement information.

25. (currently amended) A computer-implemented medical study merging method, comprising:

identifying, in accordance with a lexicon of Digital Imaging and Communication in Medicine (DICOM), a patient's related first and second medical studies to be merged; and

merging the first medical study with the second medical study, such that a resultant composite study has a study identifier different from at least one of the first and second medical studies, wherein, in accordance with said lexicon, the merging includes an automatic adding of a series of the second medical study to the composite study, the series of the second medical study having a series identifier the same as a pre-merge corresponding series identifier, with the series of the second medical study including at least an artifact with an artifact identifier the same as a pre-merge corresponding artifact identifier, such that the composite study includes series and corresponding series identifiers from both the pre-merged first and second medical studies.

26. (currently amended) The medical study merging method of claim 25, wherein the composite study is assigned a unique study identifier of the first medical study.

27. (new) The study merging method of claim 1, wherein the study identifiers of the first and second medical studies are unique among studies in a database having the distinct database entity.

28. (new) The computer readable medium of claim 12, wherein the study identifiers of the first and second medical studies are unique among studies in a database having the distinct database entity.